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BOOK REVIEWS

Contributions to South American Archeology. The George G. Heye Expedition. The Antiquities of Manabi, Ecuador. A Preliminary Report. By MARSHALL H. SAVILLE, *Loubat Professor of American Archeology, Columbia University.* New York: 1907. 4°, 135 pp., 55 pl., 9 figs.

The researches embodied in this handsome volume were undertaken by the author with the support of Mr George G. Heye, whose interest in American archeology is attested by the rich collections of art objects brought together by him and by the substantial aid he has given to students of the subject. The plan of the work is to collect and publish data relating to the precolumbian inhabitants of the extensive region lying between Peru on the south and Panama on the north, and the present volume is referred to as a preliminary report on a single province of this great and practically unexplored region.

The explorer, accompanied by his brother, left New York in May 1906, and proceeding by way of Panama soon reached Manta in the province of Manabi, the point of departure for the proposed expedition. The work in Manabi continued without interruption for six weeks. Later a trip was made to the interior where six weeks were spent in examining the antiquities of the vicinity of Riobamba, representing a distinct culture group. Later the excursion was extended to Mocha, Ambato, Latacunga, Quito, and Perucho.

The province of Manabi lies beneath the Equator and has an area of 20,442 square kilometers. It is moderately mountainous but without high ranges or peaks, the surface rising gradually from the Pacific toward the base of the Andes. The lower lands are arid, while the portions that rise above a thousand feet are moist and support a rich tropical flora. There are few streams, and although beneath the Equator, the climate is salubrious, the temperature at night rarely exceeding 70 degrees F. Until now the province has remained practically unexplored, and little is yet known of its geography, geology, and natural history. The capital is Porto Viejo, situated about twenty miles from the coast, and has about 5,000 inhabitants, two churches, a college for boys, a college for girls, a school of art, and various government buildings. Manta is the seaport. At the present time there are no pure-blood Indians within the province, the population consisting of a few whites, numerous blacks, and a still

larger percentage of mixed bloods. A number of pages of the work are devoted to the very interesting history of the province and the neighboring province of Esmeraldas. The various works consulted by the author are given in the bibliography at the end of the volume, some of the more important authors being quoted at length. The principal pre-columbian inhabitants were known as the Caras, a warlike people who had intruded themselves among the earlier inhabitants but who later abandoned the country gradually to various local tribes. There are widely divergent traditions to the effect that the country was at one time occupied by a race of giants, but these stories are without verification and may have arisen from the presence of mastodon remains in the region.

The vanguard of the more civilized Quichua tribes of the south, usually referred to as the Incas, arrived in Manabi, according to tradition, early in the fifteenth century. Colonies were established and the southern culture was introduced to a limited extent, but today there appear to be few traces of it among the archeological remains of the province. Spaniards first reached the region in 1526, and in 1527 Pizarro skirted the coast of Manabi on his way to Tumbez in northern Peru, while in 1534 Pedro de Alvarado landed in Manabi and marched with a large mixed force into the interior.

It would appear that there were numerous native villages in the region, many of the names being preserved in the Spanish records and some remaining even today. Although the archeological remains indicate that the Manabi culture was somewhat homogeneous, differing materially, however, from that of neighboring provinces, the people known historically were by no means homogeneous, the various villages speaking different dialects and given to discord and war. The Spanish annalists give some information regarding the manners and customs of the people which indicates a rather low state of culture emphasized by a debased system of religion. The province had two principal temples, one of them celebrated for its possession of a great emerald, worshiped as a deity, which had such wonderful curative powers that the sick and decrepit came long distances to be cured. The sacrifices were of gold, silver, precious stones, fine fabrics, skins, human beings—especially women, children, and captives. The other temple, situated on the island of La Plata, was also reputed to be a Mecca for the people of the mainland, a statement given substantial support by the remarkable finds of relics of varying and unique character made by Dr G. A. Dorsey in 1892, and now preserved in the Field Museum of Natural History.

Without dwelling at length on the field operations of the expedition,

the author takes up serially the archeological features of the province and the collections of art objects made.

It is recorded by the Spanish chroniclers that the lack of fresh water in the arid areas of Manabi was overcome by the ancient inhabitants by digging wells, which were sunk in the surface of the living rock to a surprising depth. It would seem that in more recent times many of these wells were abandoned and became filled with debris. Of those cleaned out in recent years, some are dry while others afford an excellent water supply. Two examples are described by our explorer: one, cut in "a sort of spiral fashion through the solid rock," is at present 42 feet deep; the opening at the surface is only 2 or 3 feet across and the diameter gradually diminishes to a few inches at the bottom. The other, which had been recently discovered, is cleaned out to a depth of 25 feet, and yields a good supply of potable water at that depth. It is 8 feet in diameter at the surface, and although excavated in the solid rock is walled up with rough stones. The natives on the arrival of the Spanish attributed these wells to the mythical giants of former times. It is quite apparent that they owe their origin to a people of greater intelligence and enterprise than the tribes encountered in the region by the whites.

That the ancient peoples possessed a considerable degree of culture is attested by the remains of buildings as well as by numerous works of sculpture and the plastic art. At Manta are traces of an extensive settlement, including the remains of hundreds of house sites and mounds, while stone implements and potsherds are scattered over the ground. The buildings contained from one to seven rooms, and were often of large size, the largest measuring forty feet in width by one hundred and ninety feet in length. They were not oriented with any close approximation to accuracy. The walls are from two to five feet in thickness and not more than three or four feet in height above the surface of the ground; they were faced with slabs of stone set on edge, the intervening space being filled with rough stones. As the region is subject to frequent earthquake shocks it is probable that the superstructures were largely of wood, cane, and thatch. Some traces of the use of adobe bricks were noted. Within and about the buildings are numerous rudely sculptured figures of men and animals, generally much weathered.

In the hills north of Monte Cristi are many house sites, generally of the same type as those of Manta. Those on the hill known as Cerro de Hojas furnish the stone seats which form so important a feature of the archeological remains of Ecuador. At one point large quantities of pottery fragments and many spindle-whorls were found in the houses of

Cerro de Hojas. Adjacent to the house sites were found stone columns, and figures of men as well as other curious sculptures, while on a neighboring hill numerous very interesting bas-reliefs were discovered. No temples were identified, and as excavations were not undertaken, no burial places were definitely located.

The most remarkable feature of the antiquities of Manabi is the stone chairs or seats, found on house sites on the low summits of the hills north of Monte Cristi. They were confined to an area about twenty miles in diameter and have not been found elsewhere. The first mention of these strange sculptures is made by Villavicencio, in 1858, who states that on the flat summit of one of the hills, presumably Cerro de Hojas, "there is a circle of seats of stone, no less than thirty in number, each of which is a sphinx, above which is the seat with two arms, all of stone, well worked and of a single piece." Our explorer, however, although encountering many seats still in place found no indication of regular order or arrangement and no traces of slabs of stone which might have served as tables.

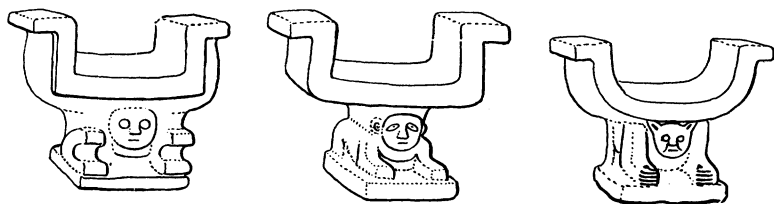


FIG. 33. — Stone seats of Manabi.

The seats, which are from one to three feet in height, less than three feet in width, and still less in depth from front to back, are made of sandstone, or, more frequently, of a grayish andesite. The upper part of the seat is quite uniform in character, but the supporting sculptures are more diversified, the larger number representing human figures and the remainder animals, especially the puma, and in exceptional cases the bird, lizard, bat, and monkey. In a few cases geometric ornamentations are carried around the vertical face of the seat. Several hundred of these objects were seen, and thirty-eight are shown in the plates.

Numerous human figures, carved from sandstone and andesite, always extremely primitive in style and rude in execution, were observed in place in the ruins of Manabi, and nineteen examples were brought to New York. Their use is not fully determined, but as they could hardly have served any architectural purpose and are not adapted to serve as

table supports, we are left to assume that they probably represent deities, and as some have depressions in the top of the head or head-dress, they probably served for burning incense. In height they range from a few inches to about two feet. They have little artistic interest, corresponding in general with sculptures of the human figure found everywhere south of the Mayan provinces.

Ruder even than the sculptured human figures are the representations of animals, the puma being the favorite subject. The figures usually have a square base, and support on their backs or are otherwise associated with short columns or pedestals, in the top of which is a cup-like receptacle indicating their identity in use with the human figures. It is not unlikely that they were associated with the stone chairs in the religious ceremonies of the people.

Related to the above in general form and probably in use are numerous short cylindrical stones, the top of which is flat and also slightly depressed or bowl-shaped. Attention is called to the fact that these

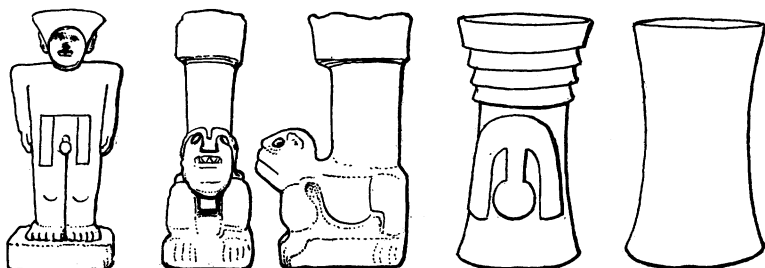


FIG. 34. — Stone incense pedestals or altars of Manabi.

pedestal-like columns correspond closely in size and shape with certain columns found in Costa Rica, some of which seem allied to the metate plates of the same region, although it is surmised that the Manabi columns may have served as pedestals for idols or incense burners.

Metates, or mealing stones, occur in large numbers but have been diligently sought by the modern inhabitants of the region for everyday use. They are simple, thin, slightly curved slabs, without legs or ornamentation. It is a remarkable fact that no stone implements, chipped or polished, were obtained, and there appears to be no record of their occurrence in the region; and no emeralds were collected, although, according to common report, the earlier explorers found many of them in possession of the natives — a large crystal of this stone being their chief deity.

Of particular interest are certain fragmentary bas-reliefs found on Cerro Jaboncillo, near Monte Cristi. They are executed on the surface of squarish slabs or plates of andesite a few inches in thickness and probably not exceeding twenty-four inches in length or width. These reliefs represent both human and animal forms, all being very simple and primitive in treatment, agreeing in this respect with the sculpture work of the South American west coast. The most striking feature of the reliefs of human figures is the crown-like arrangement of ornamental figures surrounding the head, the significance of which, unless it represents a head-dress merely, cannot even be conjectured. In the spaces about the body are figures of birds, beasts, and conventional symbols. Two of the tablets contain, instead of the human subject, figures of monsters resembling lizards. The various devices introduced into these sculptures will doubtless be more readily explained when collections have been increased.

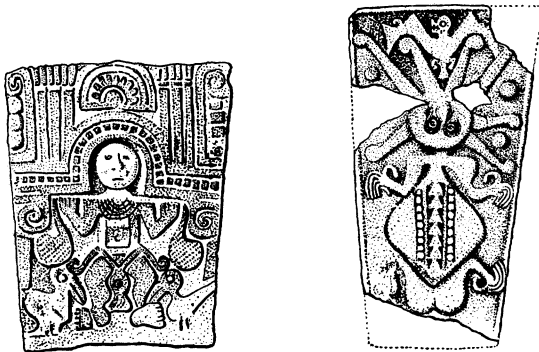


FIG. 35. — Sculptured tablets from Manabi house sites.

Although the Spanish conquerors state that many objects of gold and silver were obtained from the inhabitants of this district, nothing of the kind is in evidence today and no tradition of the discovery of objects of this class seems to exist among the present population. Objects of copper however are not rare, and an ax blade of this material was collected; also three small bells and three disks, the latter supposed to have served as breast ornaments, or possibly as bells, since they are very resonant when struck.

Fragmentary earthenware is plentiful on some of the ancient dwelling sites, but as no excavations were undertaken few entire vessels were acquired. At Manta there was much red ware, the vessels being large and the walls thick. These may have been used either for household or for

mortuary purposes. The decorations are in red paint and in incised lines. Of the minor articles of clay, spindle-whorls, displaying a variety of decorative designs, are most plentiful. There are also figurines of men and animals, stamps, and molds.

It is refreshing to have these preliminary glimpses into an untrodden archeological field, and the researches initiated by Heye and Saville are full of promise of additional interesting and valuable results. The problems of prehistoric South America and of the relation of the ancient peoples of that country to Central and North America, as well as to other adjacent land areas, are fraught with deep interest to all Americanists.

W. H. HOLMES.

Archeological Researches on the Pacific Coast of Costa Rica. By C. V. HARTMAN. Pittsburgh: Published by the Authority of the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Institute. August, 1907. *Memoirs of the Carnegie Museum*, Vol. III, No. 1. 4°, 95 pp., 47 pl., 72 figs.

This is a valuable addition to the archeological literature of Central America, affording students the opportunity of becoming acquainted with a large number of rare and interesting works of art in stone and clay from a region heretofore barely touched by the scientific explorer. The work consists of introductory matter relating to the discovery and early history of the Nicoya peninsula and to archeological explorations made previous to the year 1897, followed by an account of the researches of the author with descriptions of his own collections and the rich material of the Velasco collection recently acquired by the Carnegie Museum, as well as of the great collections preserved in the National Museum of Costa Rica. The native peoples of the Nicoya region have been almost completely absorbed into the mixed Spanish population and have lost nearly all their primitive habits and customs as well as their language. The student of their history is thus limited in his resources almost exclusively to the study of their burial places and the objects of art obtained therefrom.

The burial ground of Las Guacas, in which the author conducted his principal researches, is situated near the pueblo of Nicoya on the peninsula of Nicoya in western Costa Rica, and was entirely covered with forests when the first settlers took possession of the site about 1877. There were no indications above the ground of the treasures hidden below. The numerous pieces of broken pottery and the metates met with close to the surface proved nothing, as similar finds are common in these regions near ancient settlements and do not necessarily indicate burials. The entire burying ground does not seem to have included more than a